

INSIDE STORY

TONY PARKER: A Man of Great Abilities. 206pp. Hutchinson. 30s.

EDWARD ARNOLD
41 Maddox Street, London, W.1.

DUTCH ROMANTIC

WILLEM Kloos and his friend, Jacques Perk, who died of consumption at the age of twenty-two, occupy in Dutch literary history much the same place as Keats and Shelley in our own but sixty years later. This delay makes all the difference and English readers may sorely be forgiven if they cannot share the enthusiasm of at least the older generation of Dutch critics for the "Tachtigers", the poets of the 1880s, as self-appointed leader of whom Kloos was himself. For the student of comparative literature, however, they present an almost suspiciously neat case of international influence and, in Kloos at least, a striking example of the power of the image of poet-as-hero and of the art life.

About the existence of the Shelley influence there is no doubt. *Willem Kloos: zijn leven, zijn werk, 1859-1938*, a commendably thorough piece of scholarship, reproduces the poet's never-completed translation of Shelley's "Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni", together with his essay on Byron and Shelley. The debt that both Kloos and Perk acknowledged to Shelley was twofold—as poet and as critical theorist. Indeed, Kloos's own importance is not least that of being the first coherent Dutch poetic theorist and critic: his various essays on Perk especially have a status in Dutch Romantic poetry comparable to Wordsworth's Prefaces. Not that this is in any way formal, academic criticism. Rather, it is a *gevoelskritiek*, impressionistic, intuitive and based on the emotions. "L'art pour l'art", unity of form and content and art as passion, that is, "the most individual possible expression of the most individual possible emotion". For Kloos and Perk poetry is a value art whose task, as Kloos saw it, is to transform reality into imagination and imagination into reality. In one passage,

Willem Kloos: zijn leven, zijn werk, 1859-1938, introduced by Hubert Mielbaker. 384pp. The Hague: Bert Bakker.

reminiscent of Jean Paul, he goes out of his way to praise the visionary's confusion of poetry and religion. Something of the tone of his criticism may be gauged from the following plea for a new impetus in Dutch literature:

Beauty slumbers on the floor of life, but only he can win her who hears the ardour in his soul and the will in his hand and the kiss on his brow.

Whatever its negative side-effects, such a shift of emphasis inevitably created a heady new sense of freedom and enterprise in Dutch literature, a freedom to be itself, indeed, to find itself.

Yet even without occasional references to Swinburne and Rossetti, English readers might well find similarities of mood and attitude to some of the Pre-Raphaelites more striking than the acknowledged debts to Shelley in theme and diction. For whereas the Romantic literary attitudes that the Pre-Raphaelites adopted had already been pre-figured by bourgeois or picturesque and escapist elements in Tennyson and Browning, Kloos and Perk, and after them Gorter, Verwey and Van Eeden, because they lacked native intermediaries, short-circuited the process by imitating only such aspects of Shelley's life and work as were important for their own land's literary development. Thus it is that the messianic social and political reformer of *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam* or *The Mask of Anarchy* is unrepresented in Kloos, the stress falling rather on those aspects of Shelley's genius and life that are evident in *Epipsychidion* or the *Hyperion* to *Intellectual Beauty*, his pantheism, mysticism, and above all his cult of beauty.

Not surprisingly, since for Kloos the function of art is quite simply the creation of beauty. This attitude is borne out in the essay on *Shelley and Byron*. Here Kloos maintains that the fame of Byron, "the archangel or arch-devil of Romanticism", is due less to a collection of choice fragments that will last than to the irreverently based reception abroad of the

Byronic myth. Shelley, on the other hand, his struggles versus the society of his time exaggerated in the interests of his heroic stature, is praised for the "spiritualization of natural phenomena" and is claimed as the poet for Kloos's own time, because of his "passion for the ideal, his titanic concepts, his mysteries of imagination and melody, combined with his grandiose philosophy free of all tradition". Shelley is praised for his elevation of the poet's role, as the essay on Perk makes clear:

Others may bend down and pray in hope or fear, as if through the planks of the grave they could detect the fragrance of paradise and could confine their movements towards the vistas of eternal bliss; more blisful, though, the poet, who sees with an admiring gaze the things of this world pass by and allows the radiance of his own beauty to play over everything, permits himself no sigh of longing when they reach death, seems as sweet and wonderful to him as life—but who is at once godhead and beloved, raving and rejoicing, weeping and brooding, alone with his soul beneath the blue eternity.

This attitude underlines his stress on his difference as poet from the pettiness of the bourgeoisie that we find expressed with almost Yeatsian vehemence in such poems as "Als het later, geslacht, dees worden leet . . ." or "Dit gansche geslacht is een verdoemnis geweest". Unlike Yeats, though, he has no coherent, positive order to offer, no social alternatives however improbable. Indeed, one could perhaps interpret his constant stress on the bourgeoisie's approaching doom as a secularized, artistic equivalent of the Calvinist he opposed, even down to his variant of the "Vanitas" theme: "De mensch moet doorgaan eerle kunstenaar leeft". (The human being must die before the artist can live.)

Those who share Kloos's aesthetic standpoint might claim that these views in fact contain the essential elements of the Romantic revolt, though from any other standpoint they will seem very narrow. Yet it is understandable enough why

such a revolution was needed in Holland, was long overdue and why the Tachtigers were so widely acclaimed: with very few exceptions, nineteenth-century Dutch literature was indeed derivative and provincial, dully domesticated and talmystically moralizing. Although both Bickerdijk at the start of the century and Pottgieter in the 1850s exhibited some Romantic tendencies, there was no Dutch Romantic movement as such until 1880. In Kloos's case certainly, awareness of his own pioneer mission led to kinds of over-emphasis which may be excused as the first excesses of revolutionary zeal but which hardly deserve to be singled out for praise.

One such overemphasis is found in his self-aggrandizement, even to the point of auto-deification, evident for instance in such notorious lines as "Ik heb een God in 't diepste van mijn gedachten" ("I am a God in the deepest reaches of my thoughts"). Such a pose would be the more bearable if Kloos did not so often descend to an unpleasant pathos and self-pity that is reminiscent of Wilde or the later Verlaine (whom he met and to whom he dedicated two of his French sonnets). Like Wilde, Kloos sees himself not simply as a victim of a society's indifference but actually as a martyr, a misunderstood apostle of beauty:

God, die mijn diepste ziel ziet, wees Voor dees Uw arme, die maar steeds, Wordt door de kleinen en hun ijdel O God, mijn God, wees dees mijn ziel genadig!

Zie, 'k gaf mijn hart den menschen, 'k zie: verardig U aan mijn rooden bloed-stroom met diep klagten . . . (God, who sees to my soul's depths, be charitable to this your poor servant who I always by the small-minded and their futile cares, O God, my God, have mercy on my soul! Look, I gave my heart to mankind, saying: Save yourselves on my red blood-stream, grieving deeply . . .)

He delights in describing his own misery and anticipating his own death:

Maar neen, maar neen, 'k heb 't heste deel gekozen: Op mijne grafsteen blieden reeds de rozen (But no, but no, I have chosen the best part: Upon my grave roses already bloom And before winter it will be accomplished.)

There are occasional touches of the sardonic but none of the self-irony that sometimes enlivens his letters to the poet. For here he is concerned with a small number of recognizably Romantic themes, notably death and decay, desire for a hard-won immortality ("Maar ik zal heerlijk in mijn verhorren . . ."). But I shall rise up again glorious in my verse") and, of course, the splendid isolation of the artist. True the omission of sixty-four poems from this selection serves to tone down the more extreme self-apotheosis, present even in his earliest poems written in German, and there are compensations. The vigour with which these themes are treated reveals itself more in terms of speech rhythms, enjambement and rhetorical disruption of metre than of imagery, which for the most part is conventionally, almost emblematically, Romantic. On the other hand, at his rare best Kloos's work possesses an almost Tennysonian aural felicity:

Nauw zachtbaar wiegen op een lichte zucht De witte bloesems in de schemering; Hoe langs mijn venster met nog 'n gerucht Een enkele, al te late vogeltje, (Scarcely visible on a gentle sigh float the white blossoms in the twilight: look how past my window with still swift murmur of wings a single bird, already too late, flies.)

Whether his favourite form, the sonnet—which he took not from Shelley but from the German Romantics—was the ideal medium for his assertiveness is another matter; the frequent over-ingenious double or triple rhyme words suggest not, and it may well be that his shorter lyrics, such as the *Doodskiedes*, are the better poetry, if only because less rhetorical. For in vocabulary and imagery most of Kloos's sonnets are

very repetitive and rely too much on the same abstractions, "leven", "schoneid", "sinnari", "the same phrase images involving "lang", "weerschijs", and the overuse of such constructions as "de wereld, de afbeelding van die wereld, de stylizatie, in fact, is the traditional shorthand that one sees with the average love letter since the emotion is at once given and assumed to be by words, these can merely go towards rather than embody life.

Unlike the Pre-Raphaelites, who did not seek any objective part in the Middle Ages, the vital part in his work was that of Perk and Gorter, and there is nothing to suggest that he himself and his imagination were not too much to ask that some of the knottier points raised at the Congress be included in an official document. The absence of any reference to delegates' expressions of sympathy with the Israelis is conspicuous, indeed it was this very issue that supposedly provoked the Government's repressive measures; Ladislav Mnačko's citizenship for instance was revoked precisely because of his pro-Israeli stance. However, the good sense revealed in the Fourth Congress's declaration and countenanced at least by the official literary hierarchy makes the Government's attitude, exemplified in President Novotny's sinister warning to writers of September 1, but most particularly by the savage five-year prison sentence imposed on Jan Benes, look all the more tragically ludicrous.

The declaration has some sensible, if not soundly original, things to say, for instance, about the role of culture in an industrial society. Up to now, it warns, the efforts of the revolution have been concentrated too exclusively on the achievement of material progress. The balance must be redressed, for culture alone is competent to arrest the alienating effects of technology.

What sort of culture? The Czechoslovak writers demand a "humanist" culture—humanist in the sense that "nothing human is alien to us". Thus "every discovery about man's destiny, every new truth about man" however disquieting, is worthy of the writer's attention. Since 1949, there has been an "inexorable confusion between ideology and culture" in Czechoslovakia, and "the consequences have been tragic for creativity". The true function of culture is to make people think, and by turning it into propaganda whose only aim is ruthlessly to condition the responses of mass audiences, the revolution has reduced culture to the level of pornography. One of the great achievements of socialism has been to stamp out literacy, but in its efforts at cultural dissemination the revolution has failed at a unique opportunity, for it has not been able to distinguish between vulgarization and vulgarity.

The Czechoslovak revolution is the conviction of Lenin himself that "the revolution should never seek to destroy the cultural achievements of the preceding bourgeois epoch. In the interwar period Czechoslovakia was, according to this document, a thoroughly democratic state", a "civilization in full maturity". A wide variety of aesthetic and ideological tendencies flourished without detriment to each other. Why it is regrettable that, as in Wordsworth's criticism and in the fragment *Oleander* with some of Ken's "Kloos should have concentrated on the exclusively single aspect of Shelley's poetry in the mid-1890s, until his 1938 at the age of seventy-eight Kloos wrote no more poetry, and translation. He was anxious to have outlived his revolutionary role might have been equivoally apparent.

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NOVOTNY'S FREEDOM

The final declaration of the Fourth Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers held last June has now been published in translation in *Les Jeunes Franquises* (No. 119, 2fr.), having previously appeared in the official organ of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, *Literární Noviny*. Surprisingly, in view of reports that the Czechoslovak Government is generally in sympathy with the most militant non-conformists. The tragedy is that a small number of bureaucrats are able to perpetuate a situation repugnant to a vast majority of people.

And writers continue to be harassed, sometimes in the most absurd cloak and dagger fashion. It would seem, particularly if the young writers' manifesto recently published in *The Sunday Times* is authentic—it was disclaimed by the Writers' Union—that a violent showdown between the intellectuals and the bureaucrats may not be far away. The same may be true of the Soviet Union. There, for the time being, fairly insignificant and unfortunately rather mediocre young writers must bear the brunt of the bureaucrats' fury—the underground magazine *Phocaris* 1966 which in a way started the chain reaction that has now landed several young writers, including Bukovsky, in gaol, contains nothing of literary merit. But famous writers have been luckier, and there are indications that for their vigorous dissent can produce results. It has for instance been reported that after his courageous letter to the Writers' Congress last May Solzhenitsyn's private papers and manuscripts were returned by the police, and there are rumours that his novel, *The Cancer Ward*, may at last be published. The worldwide reputation caused by the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel may have made the authorities think twice about what the consequences for Soviet prestige would be if they imprisoned Solzhenitsyn or, say, Voznesensky, whose recent letter to *Pravda* was as outspoken as anything ever published by Sinyavsky and Daniel. For the really important writers, firmly articulated dissent may now be a more effective weapon than silence.

THE ORDEAL OF EVELYN WAUGH

Sir,—In your "The Ordeal of Evelyn Waugh" (August 24), I am struck by your reviewer's reference to "the artificial heretics of Michael Arlen, Huxley (Aldous, I presume) and Hemingway" (it is not clear whether Waugh or your reviewer considers them to be "artificial").

Neither is it clear just which heretics we are to consider so talented—since these three writers all produced several novels each, with leading ladies in proportionate numbers. Nor do we know what he means by "artificial". Assuming, however, that we are to take the dictionary definition of unreal, in the case of at least three of the ladies in question, nothing could be further from the fact.

I refer, of course, to Iris March in *The Green Hut*, to Lady Brett in *The Sun Also Rises*, and to the heroine of *Point Counterpoint*, whose name escapes me at the moment. These were three of the most successful, and perhaps the most beautiful, of Michael Arlen's, Huxley's and Hemingway's best novels, although his later books were better. It is instructive to note that, far from being "artificial", the heroines of all three of these novels were based on real people—in fact, on the same person. I do not know if it is generally known, but the late Nancy Cunard was the model for all three women. (My authorities are Janet Flanner and the late E. V. Rieu, who knew Hemingway in Paris.)

For me, at least, Lady March in *The Green Hut* is cut from the same cloth. The time would be right, too, if I had been there twenty years ago. Waugh's Ryder writes at Brighthelm early in the 1940s. Artificially, I suppose, but more likely someone he knew—someone they likely knew at different places. It would be amusing if it were Nancy again.

JOHN GUENTHER, 36 Marvin Avenue, Brewster, New York.

Our reviewer writes:—I regret the mistake about Algie Simons's name, a slip the more indefensible that a month ago, in another periodical, I had written another writer for whom Simons's given name was "Mindy". I had judged—joke, since the Battle of Mid-

the frequently reported fact that a vast majority of Czechoslovak intellectuals stand in fervent opposition to bureaucratic intervention in the arts. That these same intellectuals are socialists, largely unsympathetic to capitalist economics and firmly identified with what they feel are the betrayed ideals of the revolution, is also well known. Indeed, there is every evidence that even the party members of the Writers' Union—Mr. Mnačko himself, for instance, and a number of other eminent writers, among them Jan Prohazka and Ladislav Vackulik, have now been expelled from the party for rebelliousness. are usually in sympathy with the most militant non-conformists. The tragedy is that a small number of bureaucrats are able to perpetuate a situation repugnant to a vast majority of people.

LIFE AND LOVES OF FLAUBERT

Sir,—Your review (September 7) of my recent book on Gustave Flaubert is a personal opinion and I do not intend to challenge him on them, but he is surely being unreasonable when he objects: "There is nothing about Flaubert's magnificent technical originality which made him the greatest virtuoso who has ever practised prose fiction, and a seminal influence in the development of the European novel."

This could not possibly have been attempted in a volume dealing only with Flaubert's first published work, and entitled *The Making of the Master*. This could be achieved only in the second planned volume, when his entire work had been viewed as a whole, and especially his masterpiece, *L'Education sentimentale*, on which his true claims for immortality lie. This would be a rather quick two columns. I must suggest to you what, say, an entire monthly or bi-weekly page devoted to small presses would do! Michael Armstrong's comment I find indelible both the serious need for, and the shameful lack of, good information in the field.

For some time I have been suggesting that the larger literary reviews and magazines, as well as the big publishers, "invest" in virtually their own future by supporting small magazines and presses, with review columns, critiques, reduced ad rates, grants, etc. Chances are good that the people whom you are reviewing (and, even, who write your reviews) today had their beginnings and developments through small magazines and pamphlets. Where private presses abound, art flourishes and humanity is served—though it is hell on the nerves of the bureaucrats and the trigger finger of the general.

The hope behind the *Directory of Little Magazines* and the quarterly *Small Press Review*, both of which you generously mentioned, is to help readers, writers and small magazines editors. We suppose that the poet who studies it carefully will find, among some prospective markets for his work, many that he would not consider him for reasons of style, length, or just a difference in madures. But poets are more often careless than careful: is a matter for editors to work on. I personally feel that editors, placing themselves as they do between poet and print, must accept the responsibility of dealing humanely with all poets who come their way.

Whatever else may be said about relationships and responsibilities between large and small publishers, poets and editors, your letter from Stuart Mills of the Trent Book Shop (August 24) put the finger on the real enemy: silence. Let there be noise.

LEONARD V. FULTON, Publisher, *Directory of Little Magazines; Small Press Review; Dust Magazine*, Box 123, El Cerrito, California 94530.

JEFFREY'S JOURNAL

Sir,—I beg permission to use your journal to make my apologies to a scholar whom I have let down. About two years ago I undertook to write an introduction to an edition of Francis Jeffrey, unpublished American journals. The discoverer and transcriber of this valuable document was a distinguished member of the Glasgow University Medical School, at the moment working in Los Angeles. I received from him two copies of his transcription and a photograph of the extremely difficult manuscript. These I gave to my publisher, in the course of a move or, as we say in Scotland, a "flitlog", the letters have disappeared, and by a sudden breakdown in my memory I cannot recall either the name or the address of the transcriber and editor of the manuscript.

I shall be very grateful if he will write to me, and I shall send him the introduction, which of course he may now not wish to use.

D. W. BROGAN, 1 Hedgerley Close, Cambridge.

(Other letters are on page 824)

den is very well known among students of British regional history. I cannot see in what way I defame De Leon. I have read a good deal of his writings and he did, I think, represent that irrelevance to the realities of American life which was the weakness of American Marxists. The fault may be in America; the true fault may be vindicated; but that is a matter of opinion. Daniel De Leon was an interesting man, more intelligent but no more important than H. M. Hyndman. I know that the older he got, the more heard denied his obvious debt to Marx and denied this, admittedly greater, debt to Madison. But I stick to my view that Beard, for the most fruitful period of his life, was a "kind of Marxist". What is a 100 per cent Marxist? Did Marx not deny that he was a Marxist as tradition affirms? Professor Daniels seems to believe that there is an outmoded Marxist Vatican which defines the meaning of "Marxism". If so, where is it? It is not even certain any more that there is, in the old sense, an orthodox Vatican of any kind.

THE TRIAL of Ezra Pound

Mr Cornell was Ezra Pound's lawyer. He describes the poet's indictment for treason by the United States government in 1945, his trial, confinement for thirteen years, and eventual release in 1958. The book sets out all the relevant documents, including facsimiles of Mr Pound's letters and transcripts of two of his Italian broadcasts.

RDLF P. LESSENICH, Department of English Studies, Bonn University, Germany.

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To the course of Professor Sullivan's narrative architecture, sculpture, painting and calligraphy, bronzes, ceramics and the decorative arts are all discussed. He relates them to one another, and to the evolving pattern of Chinese thought and social life. With 73 pages of plates, one in colour, and many drawings and diagrams in the text. 42p.

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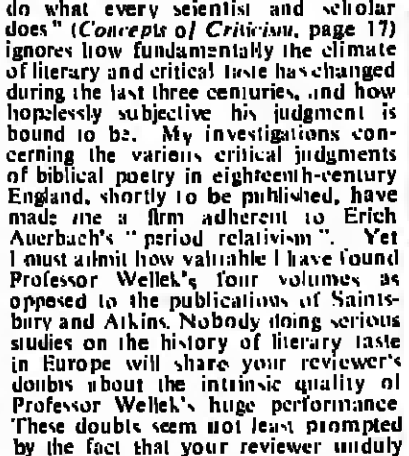
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WELL BOWLED, ROMMEL!

GEOFFREY WAGNER: *The Sands of Valour*. 404pp. Cassell, 30s.

Nothing like a silver wedding if nothing like a silver wedding. Geoffrey Wagner's long and crowded novel about the desert war, and the tough and stylish buccannery who fought it, comes out to greet the twenty-fifth anniversary of Alamein.

Strident and flamboyant, this is not at all a book for the lover of muted effects, of Jacobean throat-scrapings or Proustian indirections. Mr. Wagner is a writer who runs straight at his hurdles. Nerves are over-stretched, bodies driven into a light-headed weariness and "brow-up" is equally the word for the strong, sweet tea that marks the end of the day, or for the roasting inferno of the shelled tank.

Nearly always the enemy is fear rather than Germans; Rommel is the captain of a very good visiting side; you face him as you would a very fast howler on a very bumpy pitch; Rommel in fact is as much a hero as the rest of them, and his reaction to a top-level communication from the Führer is to say to an accompanying Colonel: "Let us burn this obscenity!" only Roger Wein-garten, the Jew from New York who has managed to join the Third Dragoon's armoured unit upon which the book focuses, fights because he hates, and dies attacking a Panzer with his bare hands.

Perhaps Mr. Wagner heaps rather too much on to his plate: all those officers with their public-school-country-gentleman background, their nerves screwed up, their brief wild rutting seasons in Cairo or Alex, their

HEARTSOIRES

IRA MORRIS: *La Borgia*. 214pp. Chitto and Windus, 25s.

Mrs. Wilbraham, the Borgia in question, is an old and ugly American widow of great wealth, scheming away the last year of her life in an over-decorated apartment on Fifth Avenue. She had been a manipulator on a grand scale (her social achievement was to push her husband into Congress) but now her needs have diminished. A French butler, a nephew who is her heir and a couple of sycophantic clergy-men are the only toys with which she still manages to get much fun. They in turn have their own little schemes, which extend the interest of Mrs. Wilbraham's intrigues into equally loveless subtleties. But the nasty black comedy conceals a soft neo-Freudian heart: Mrs. Wilbraham, it turns out, pursues power

because she has never had love.

Mr. Morris's attitude may be humane but he treats his characters with amused condescension: they are a bunch of resounding bluffs and ant look whose malice or stupidity is the product of frustrated good intentions. Their trappings are drawn from the stockpot of international cliché—the Fernand butler and Minnie-Rose his wife, a Southern lovely whose father "ravaged her virginity on a Texas farm." The author's knowing comments ("Only a foolish man would put his beloved to the acid test of friendship") endorse the tone of banal sophistication. The story is told briskly and with enjoyment but *La Borgia* is Mr. Morris's ninth novel, and he presents Mrs. Wilbraham and her dangling inheritors with the expertise of an habitual raconteur.

CRIMINUSCULE

JOHN BALL: *The Cool Cottontail*. 191pp. Michael Joseph, 25s.

A cottontail is a non-nodist to a nudist and John Ball's second story featuring his Negro detective Virgil Tibbs is set in a Californian nudist park. Two faults: insufficient clueing and a relentless determination to educate us in the liberal virtues. Its own virtues: pleasant people, a good heart and competent story-telling.

CONRAD VOSS BARK: *See the Living Crocodiles*. 192pp. Gollancz, 21s.

Mr. Voss Bark is one of the more amiable thriller writers, and his Mr. Holmes, the P.M.'s own intelligence man, is one of the more perceptive and ingenious of our native heroes. But this latest book—Mr. Holmes chasing a missing scientist to the Ile de Re—is a bit laboured and contrived. The putative love of the last book is discarded without mention for a new one; the scientist's motivations are absurd, and the titular vengeance is too long prepared.

S. H. COURTIER: *See Who's Dying*. 192pp. Hammond, Hammond, 18s.

It is surprising that this Australian thriller writer is not better known, for in his particular field he is of high quality, a better writer than the late Arthur Upfield yet making simi-

lar use of his country's history and geography. This spy story, heavily anagrammatized, is wildly improbable and wildly exciting.

LESLEY EGAN: *The Nameless Ones*. 212pp. Gollancz, 21s.

Lesley Egan is more or less America's John Creasy, producing similarly solid, diligent accounts of professional police work, several cases to each book, and just a touch too much suburban domesticity behind the policemen. But in this latest Californian story the domesticity is thankfully a little less.

JOHN GARDNER: *Madrigal*. 310pp. Muller, 25s.

The first part of this latest adventure of cowardly killer Boycie Oakes is charming, with pretty send-ups of Len Deighton plus a touch of Bond, yet missing the usual fault of send-ups—insufficient plot. But by the second half Boycie has found manhood and we are in another kind of thriller. Both are above par, but they don't quite jell. And where does newly bold Boycie go from here?

PHILIP JONES: *The Fifth Defector*. 202pp. Heinemann, 21s.

It is unusual in these days for a reasonably intelligent story about treachery, public and private, to have a happy ending. *The Fifth Defector*

does. It concerns the British vice-consul in a large east-Italian city who has blotted his copybook once by overplaying the game and now cannot tell whether a decision to answer a trans-Curtain cry for help would wipe out the blot or smear it all over the page.

J. J. MARRIC: *Gileon's Wrath*. 189pp. Hodder and Stoughton, 18s.

Another of Mr. Marric's sympathetic middlebrow stories of the higher echelons of Scotland Yard: fanatic sacrilege and drugged phantasies are the highlights.

PATRICIA MCGERR: *Murder is Absurd*. 192pp. Gollancz, 21s.

The son of a famous American light-comedy actress writes a godot-play whose Elsinorean title suggests discomposing suspicions about his father's death some fifteen years earlier. His famous stepfather, to guard the situation, offers to play lead in a type of drama beyond his experience. Discussion of the play and the netting techniques required are more substantial than the mystery element, but this when revealed is sufficiently shocking.

JENNIE MELVILLE: *A Different Kind of Summer*. 155pp. Hodder and Stoughton, 16s.

Another of Jennie Melville's original if slightly over-atmospheric stories of Detective-Sergeant Charman Daniels (now married) and her work in the well-made town of Dearham Hills. This one opens with a decapitated body in an unidentifiable coffin. Two major red herrings are inadequately linked to the main plot.

MAURICE PROCTER: *Exercise Hood-wink*. 183pp. Hutchinson, 21s.

Defeat at last for Dixie Costello, King of Grandchester crooks, in one of Mr. Procter's better police stories, far-ranging and well organized. Whom will Inspector Martineau (angle with next?)

RAY WARD TAYLOR: *Doomsday Squares*. 254pp. Gollancz, 25s.

Quite a good and certainly a well-complicated thriller in the Strange-love tradition, but ethically disconcerting for the European reader who is likely to suppose the happy ending has been reached, when the American doomsday weapon has been "over-taken." But there is still a long way to go, and what the author thinks up as a happy ending is something different.

Letters to the Editor (continued)

ALLEGORICAL

Sir, In his reply to Mr. Scott's letter (August 31) your reviewer implies the use of the word "allegory" in connection with the *metaphorical* status of Henryson's fables by reference to *The Cock and the Jew*. He adds that "the authority we should appeal to" on the question is "not Henryson himself, but our response to the poetry."

With this I would agree, with the proviso that this response be conditioned as far as possible by an awareness of Henryson's own intentions. His use of allegorical interpretation in the *metaphorical* status of the fables surely varies greatly. In such a case as that of *The Fall of the Islands of the North*, the allegory is applied with unmistakable directness. In *The Cock and the Jew*, to use your reviewer's own example, this is not so, and the position carried on in the *metaphor*, by which the common sense of the Cock, with which we naturally sympathize, is shown up as a natural wisdom and opposed to the divine wisdom of Providence, which we should properly prefer once we are brought to recognize it. The wisdom of man is the foolishness of God: the tale is placed in this way in a universal spiritual context, and the effect of the whole hinges on Henryson's use of this allegorical reversal.

Henryson is here using a well-established method, comparable to Sophocles's use of the Chorus in the *Antigone*, or to Chaucer's Epilogue of *Truth and Criseyde*.

ELIZABETH A. F. WATSON, The University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham.

Sir, I have just returned from a review of my book, *Living with Butterflies*, published in your paper on August 27, in which the writer states that "this is a book which will be read by many people who are not butterfly collectors." This is entirely incorrect. There is no mention of anything like this in the book. I retired from active butterfly collecting on April 6, 1966, and my review, published in your paper on August 27, in which the writer states that "this is a book which will be read by many people who are not butterfly collectors." This is entirely incorrect. There is no mention of anything like this in the book. I retired from active butterfly collecting on April 6, 1966, and my review, published in your paper on August 27, in which the writer states that "this is a book which will be read by many people who are not butterfly collectors." This is entirely incorrect. There is no mention of anything like this in the book. 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